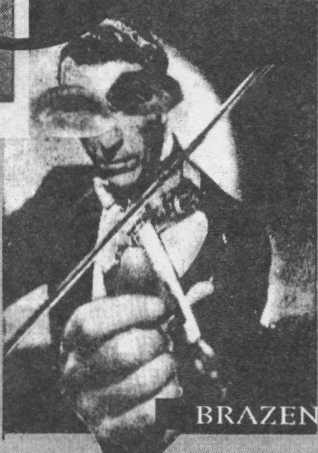


BRAZEN ORALITY



BRAZEN

ORALITY

A review of SPOKEN WORD recordings

CONTACTS

5\$

REVIEWS
scene reports

Brazen Auralities

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Reviews

Brazen Oralities reviews audio recordings of poets and performers reading their works. We take cassettes, vinyl, and compact disc recordings. We'll also try to review video work, if there's enough interest. If you'd like to send your material for review, please remember to enclose your contact address, price and ordering information, and any background material you think might interest us.

Be aware that all copies received will go into the BA archive never to return. That said, if you send an extra copy of your work, we'll forward it along to the local college radio station CKUT-FM for their library, where it will get some airplay.

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Brazen Oralities is addressed to those working in the Spoken word performance scene. It is the only publication we know of that covers this work exclusively. Recordings, tours, publications could all be advertised in these pages.

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Slam dunk!

Contents

Publisher's Notes

At last. The Brazen Orality web-page came into being over this long winter but the print version is half a year slow, at least. It sees the day only because of the work of the reviewers and editors who pushed for its completion, while I lolly-gagged my way through the last couple of seasons thinking I'd get to this project from one day to the next. This long delay will be particularly irksome to Bob Holman, Julie Ritter and John Sobol who graciously wrote the scene reports contained in this issue, who now see them appear in print half a year later than expected.

Brazen Oralities has changed. I no longer do the reviews, lay-out, graphics and publication. If left to me, the work simply would never have been completed. A new team reviews the work, and edits the mag, and puts it to bed. This will allow us to publish Brazen on a regular basis. Our next issue will appear in mid-September.

We shifted the format and the contents a bit. We no longer have a Video section, though we will review the occasional tape if submitted. Our Sources section, where we listed hodge-podge publishers of Spoken Word, also disappeared. It seemed that it duplicated information contained in our Reviews section. We also no longer make mention of work we haven't yet heard.

The scene remains vigorous. Several labels continue to release strong work, and may enjoy commercial success. I think of the Gang of Seven (But do they still exist?), New Alliance, Rhino, and now Mercury. MTV and PBS coverage of the scene proselytizes to the nation. One-shot CD's and cassettes appear with good work but suffer the problem of lack of distribution.

We received a lot of positive feedback about the zine. We all believe in the need for the publication. We'd like it to become a nexus for artists, DJ's, promoters and publishers.

We welcome your comments and support.

Fortner Anderson
Publisher

•04• **Poultry Olympics**
Deborah Ann

•05• **L.A. Noise**
Julie Ritter

•06• **Lotus Land Bulls-eye**
John Sobol

•07• **Bite from the Big Apple**
Bob Holman

No Flash in the Pan Here Folks
Vince Tinguely

•08• **Reviews**

•14• **Compilations**

•17• **Websites**

•18• **Radio Resources**

Poultry Olympics:

The 1995 National Poetry SLAM
(Aug. 9-12, Ann Arbor, Michigan)

by Deborah Ann



Originally I was under the impression that the difference between a poetry SLAM and a poetry reading was that there is a greater element of performance in a SLAM whereas a reading implies the importance of the page. But the real difference, I think, is that a poetry SLAM is a competition. The slammers are judged, points are tallied, winners are rewarded. The rationale behind this suspiciously sporty approach to poetry is that a door way of communication is opened between the poets and the audience. In the words of the 1995 National Poetry SLAM handbook, "by staging the reading as a competition, poets came to realise that the audience expected communication and not merely an opportunity to marvel at the poet's exalted language and erudite cerebrations." Have the SLAM organisers not encountered Plato's *Republic*? Perhaps someone should read it aloud to our esteemed hosts. Let's face it. Regardless of rules, regulations and other accessories, a SLAM boils down to the poet's presentation, which, I'm afraid, is one way communication for the duration of the piece. That time belongs primarily to the poet in a form of power, and no judge, heckler or sympathetic score can change that. If the poem is good, more power to the poet, and the opposite follows. Even the handbook admits SLAM poetry's failure in light of audience-poet communication by stating, "an audience that was apprehensive about reacting to the poets was more that willing to react

to a set of judges, letting them know just what they thought of their particular scoring." Once again, art has been hijacked by a league of critics.

Okay, okay, I confess. I certainly would never have entered a SLAM competition if it wasn't for the dangling carrot. Hell, I had an abortion to pay for (fucker took off) and the \$100 really came in handy. Yeah, yeah, I also saw some really good work and met some interesting people. So to get to the point, what went down at the 1995 National Poetry SLAM in Ann Arbor, Michigan?

Montréal was the only Canadian team to compete in the Nationals. Alex Jacobs, representing the Mohawk Nation, competed in the Individuals as did Torontonians R. David Stephens. Jill Batson, originally English but now living in T.O. (T.O. SLAM organiser and producer of *Word Up* on Virgin Records) was also there, but mysteriously without a T.O. team. Strange, since the team advertised in the handbook. Rumours flew. Perhaps she poisoned the lot of them with Earl Grey tea on the trip down; or maybe she found a tall tree and left them hanged and dangling from various shades of white stockings. But let's talk winners.

Patricia Smith from Boston won the Individuals for the fourth time with pieces she's been performing for five years and Asheville, North Carolina won the team competition in light of their nationalist fervour. "America! America! America!" doesn't quite turn

my poetic crank, thank you very much, but then, neither does America (ignorance is piss).

The Montreal team I competed with placed 24th out of 27 team entries. So why did we fare so poorly? Well, perhaps it had something to do with content. We did not speak of love (a real SLAM seller), nor did we speak of racial anger (it seems that being a young, angry white woman is not the American way). Profanity didn't go over too fucking well, which left me at the bottom of the barrel smuggling booze into non-alcoholic environments.

I must say, however, you can buy booze at Ann Arbor convenience stores until 2 a.m., which I find very civilised, seeing as a number of bars refused to serve me because they felt I was too drunk (the angry white woman thing?). The pornos were edited to shit but the hotel was pleasant enough, and I did manage to meet the odd deluded American drunk. I didn't get laid (drag), but I did pick up a wonderful little chap book called *The Complete Failure Of Everything* by Jose Padua (Apathy Press Poets, 2924E. Coldspring Lane, Baltimore, Maryland 21214). In sum, the entire event struck me as a kind of Poultry Olympics, and there's nothing more annoying than sober, chicken shit poets.

Editor's Note: Deborah Ann had the honour of finishing 117th out of 117 competitors at Ann Arbor. On the strength of this showing she was asked to write this column.

L.A. Noise

by Julie Ritter

When given the subject of literature, most academicians do not immediately think Patti Smith or Jim Carroll, but the 2 week long "Rock 'n' Roll in Literature" event at Los Angeles' MET Theatre may well have been enough to send those scholars running for a trade-in on their dog-eared volumes of Robert Frost.

Darrell Larson produced and directed the event as part of the theatre's on-going Great Writers Series. Larson keeps company on the MET Board of Directors with Holly Hunter, Ed Harris, and Amy Madigan, among others. The list of the founding benefactors of MET reads like a who's who of cultural Los Angeles. Among those striving to keep art alive in the City of Angels are Bette Midler, James Burrows, Kevin Costner, Harrison Ford, Danny Glover, and Dustin Hoffman. Given this impetus, it is no surprise that the event became the unadulterated celebration of music and words that all involved had hoped it could be.

The festival began with a Gala Rock 'n' Roll Revue and continued with nightly tributes to various artists, including the Beatles, Bob Dylan, and Sam Shepard. Closing night found the event co-producer, Harvey R. Kubernik, the man responsible for all of the spoken word recordings on New Alliance

Records, heading off an evening of readings specific to that enigma of rock n'roll life — touring.

Among those reading their own works to capacity crowds at the MET were Danny Weizmann, John Densmore of the Doors, Linda J. Albertano, Pleasant Gehman, BP Fallon, Elisabeth Belile, and Dave Alvin of the Blasters. Belile's critically acclaimed *Polishing the Bayonet* and Alvin's brilliant *Any Hard Times Are Behind You* are both on the new release list with Incommunicado Press.

In addition, Tim Curry read from the works of John Lennon; John Densmore presented excerpts from his own novel, and

"Elvis is Dead:

Why Are You Alive?"

Beverly D'Angelo and Chloe Webb read Patti Smith. And what Elvis Presley tribute would be complete without a reading of Joyce Carol Oates' "Elvis is Dead: Why Are You Alive?" Biographers shared excerpts from the works of such musical luminaries as the Beach Boys, Bob Marley, Jimi Hendrix, Muddy Waters, Bessie Smith, Rose Maddox, and U2.

Los Angeles is indeed rich in rock and roll history, but even in a town where Jim Morrison is often regarded as the patron saint of this rock-music-and-literature union, the connection is barely explored. Not until this event has L.A. been host to such a diverse banquet of music and words. If the sold-out crowds at the MET theater for this mid-summer festival were any indication, we are likely to see a reprise of this event next year.

Lotus land bulls-eye

by John Sobol

Vancouver — City of Angels. No
 Vancouver — City of Joy. Wrong again
 How about Vancouver— City of raging poets?
Bulls-eye.

Examples abound but here's a good one: on August 10th, eight poets blasted off at SPKN.WRD.1, a performance event both audio and video taped for imminent CD-ROM production. SPKN.WRD.1 was the brainchild of T. Crane, poet and spoken word editor of *Euphony*, a weekly on-line arts magazine which is averaging 400,000 hits a month on the World Wide Web.

The show itself, staged at the Glass Slipper, featured 15 minute performances by many of Vancouver's most popular and influential poets: bill bissett, Sheri-D Wilson, Kedrick James, Alice Tepexcuintle, Gerry Gilbert, and T. Crane. Rounding out the line-up were Patti Howes, a spunky playwright, and me. Work by all these poets (photos, audio clips, written poems and articles) can be examined in *Euphony* magazine (<http://euphony.com/euphony>). Michael Green, of Calgary's One Yellow Rabbit Theatre, did a fine job of hosting the event.

One goal of SPKN.WRD.1 was to show off the wealth and scope of local talent. By this or any other standard the kickass show was a roaring success. Another goal was to unite the local scene. This worked too, I think. Like several other cities, Vancouver has a long and vital history of performance poetry. The difference seems to be that here, through events like SPKN.WRD.1, fertile bridges between poetic generations are created and welcomed. My biggest beef with the slam world is its lack of connection to the breadth of living oral poetries and poets. (Actually I've got other beefs —the triviality, the egotism, the narrow-mindedness, etc. but more on that for another time.) In Vancouver, despite having more than its fair share of infighting and bullshit, poets young and old seem genuinely interested in each other's work. Talent is one thing, but the opportunity to hone your work by hearing and meeting experienced senior poets is an exceptional resource.

In fact, Vancouver has played host to several excellent poets this summer, including Paul Dutton, who gave a

performance at Black Sheep Books, and dubzz/poet/at/large Clifton Joseph, who spent several weeks here stirring things up as only he can. Other activities of not include the completion of *Power of the Word* a feature documentary by Jeanne Harco with interviews and performances by jello bialfra, Lydia Lunch, Exene Cervenka, Attila the Stockbroker, Don Bajema, Professor Griff, Kedrick James, and Rollins. Annie Frazier Henry has also completed a new poetry video, titled *Visions*. This 10 minute piece has already been acclaimed at several video festivals. John Trudell was scheduled to perform at Under the Volcano, but never made it. Cargo Records has released a CD called *Red Sugar and Saint Eustache* featuring poet Neil Eustache, who has made quite a reputation for himself as a funny, sweet and truly deranged S.O.B.

Tom Sniders continues to run his monthly *Tongue of the Slip* series and weekly poetry evenings occur at a variety of venues including DV8, and the Malcolm Lowry Room. Jamie Reid is keeping a steady flow on his photocopied mag, *Dadababy*. Fortner Anderson, the publisher of *Blazing Auralities*, dropped by for a few days recently and gave a fine rendition of this excellent and wonderfully obscene poem, *I'm a man* in the Granville Subway Station before numerous awestruck passersby. All in all, the raucous voices of poets have resounded throughout Vancouver this year.

I'm in a group called AWOL Love Vibe, a polyvocal action poet-trio with Alex Ferguson and Kedrick James. We went to the Czech Republic in June and did several shows there, including one in a castle and another in a 12th century monastery. During that trip we took a vow of orality refusing to read or write anything for the entire month. It was a damn shame to come back to the lame-ass world of textual communication. If there are any other polyvocal poetry ensembles out there, we'd like to talk.

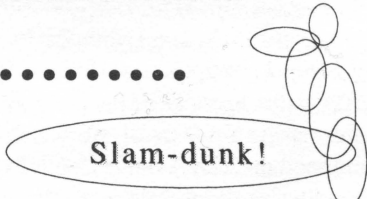
BITES FROM THE BIG APPLE

by Bob Holman

It's a Golden Moment in New York! The megawatt tanning salon spotlight has moved on, and the poets are recommuning, fortified and dancing. Jordy Trachtenberg has created the PoemFone (212-641-4234) which has spawned same in SF and LA. Trachtenberg's audacious stick-it-in-yr ear impressed the folks at Tomato Records: the first poetry CD from this r'n'r'n'b house will be the PomeFone compilation ranging from John Giorno, the UR Poppa, who is finally getting the props due an original or pre- (his book from *Serpent's Tail*, *You Got to Burn to Shine*, — oolala!) to newcomer Anne Elliott's sizzling "Tracks." Solo Tomatoes follow: Edwin Torres, the NuYoFuturist, phoneme aerobics and word moods; Bobby Miller, World's First Poetry Dance Single (revopolitico on the gay tip); and, still up in the air, the first Spoken Word by Todd Colby, lead rant of Drunken Boat and the Poet of the Moment.

Ron Brawer, who runs the series at Eureka Joe's, is releasing a compo of family poems recorded live at Eureka's...Harold Goldberg's *Relationships from Hell* (Big Deal/Caroline), 90s love songs including the debut of the mysterious searing seer sister Silver is doing well...We all are listening to the Last Poets...Reg E Gaines second, *Sweeper Don't Clean My Streets* is just out from Mercury...NuYo Records two releases, Maggie Estep's *No More Mr. Nice Girl* and *Grand Slam* are state-of-artski...add to this the outrageous treatment Paul Skiff did to compose his 100-voice *Nuyorican Symphony* on Knitting Factory—only for those looking for the New and Now!...Butch Morris will devote one of four CD's in his new boxed set to the Poet's Choir he created at Steve Cannon's stoop and performed at Lincoln Center et al...Norton will be publishing Willie Perdomo's virgin effort, *Where a Nickel Costs a Dime* this spring, with a CD of this man's extraordinary reading folded in...The rest is books, Slams, and Internet. Tootle-oo.

Mon.....tre


 Slam-dunk!

NO FLASH IN THE PAN HERE, FOLKS

by Vince Tinguely

Montreal's spoken word scene exploded in the summer of 1994 and shows no signs of slowing down. As we go to press, a major bilingual word fest, *Tongue Tied/Langue Liée* looms on the horizon. From May 3rd to the 5th, dozens of spoken word performers from Montreal, Toronto, Vancouver and New York will gather at a series of events that'll feature everything from opera to rap to rants to ensemble language mayhem.

The winter saw street-level activity continue with poets and text-based performers appearing at the popular *Yawp* cabaret series, at *Urban Wanderers* readings, bilingual multimedia *Poesie* evenings, the *Vox Hunt* poetry slams, and numerous one-off events. The sheer number of opportunities for aspiring poets and performers provides a perfect breeding ground for exciting ideas and talent exchanges. All this activity flies in the face of predictions of flash-in-the-pan status for Montreal's spoken word scene. Regardless of how much or how little media coverage there is, large audiences continue to come out to hear some words spoken well.

This winter we lost Ian Stephens, a respected Montreal poet, singer and recording artist. His death saddened everyone who knew him from his intense, inspiring performances and his devotion to the spoken word scene. We'll miss him.

Reviews

LINDA J. ALBERTANO

Skin

CD, New Alliance Records

PO Box 1389, Lawndale, CA 90260 (1993)

New Alliance is at the forefront of companies bringing spoken word recordings to a broader audience. Linda J. Albertano is a fine example of what they have to offer, delivering a languid series of dreamlike narratives from the western edge of the continent. Her unhurried takes on sexual politics, apathy and indifference, injustice, desire, and spirituality, are those of someone who's examined life carefully before picking her targets and taking up her pen. Every piece is complex enough to demand repeated listenings, and the excellent musical accompaniment always serves to complement, rather than overshadow her work. (VT)

LYNDA BARRY

The Lynda Barry Experience

CD, Gang of Seven Inc.

P.O. Box 98, Larkspur, CA 94977-9998 (1992)

Everyone knows Lynda Barry, right? She's been drawing *Ernie Pook's Comeek* for the *Village Voice* and other weeklies for ages. *The Lynda Barry Experience* is, like her comic strip, a series of stories drawn loosely from her childhood on 25th Avenue South in Seattle.

Stories about childhood can really grab the listener for two reasons. First, they have an immediate resonance, because everyone was a child, so everyone can identify. Second, narratives seen through a child's eye pick out details with a special poignancy. Why do people get divorced? Why is there racism? Why are there always small-minded pecking-orders? Despite our adulthood, we can still relate to the child's gut response to the world's cruelties.

Lynda Barry is as good a storyteller as she is a cartoonist. It takes no time to be swept up into her hilarious narratives, wickedly embellished with her interpretations of people's accents and vocal mannerisms. After hearing her stories, our own childhood memories seem that much less painful, that much more precious. (VT)

JOHN M. BENNETT

Coruscation Drain/ Autophagia

Cass., Luna Bisonte Productions

137 Leland Ave., Columbus, OH 43214 (1993)

It never fails to amaze me that certain artists will go to great lengths to be unlistenable. It isn't the recording quality at fault here either; John M. Bennett's poetry is the sort that causes almost instantaneous glazing of the eyes. Seconds later the listener's hand goes for the 'off' switch as if with a

mind of its own.

Coruscation Drain is a collaboration with the musicians of the *Strangulensis Research Labs*. On it, Bennett's text is clearly recorded so we can hear how clearly bad it is. On *Autophagia*, Bennett's words are buried under collaborator Mike Hovancsek's sounds. This would count as a blessing if the music weren't as monotonously unbearable as the poetry. (VT)

BICHOS

Cass., 626 Kathryn Avenue, Santa Fe, NM 87501, USA

ph.#= 505.982.8340; about 20 min. of music & "recitation" (or cracked-throat ranting, bellowing, etc.)

Quite an unusual and rewarding little item, this 'un': five short musical pieces utilizing the drums/bass/guitar/guttural-yelps combo to unique effect.

Redolent of painted desert atmospheres and feelings, as one might expect from an outfit emanating from the Santa Fe region, it includes powerful ventings of the emotional/cultural pain, anger, boredom, and despair suffusing the Indian reservation experience in that part of the gone world (or am I making huge presumptions here?).

The musical and verbal deliveries are both pleasingly loose, i.e. - not brittlely didactic or too theatrical, though these people are capable of whipping up some fairly convincing punk-rock inflected anguish all the same.

Musically speaking, these guys wear their (post-flannel) Firehouse/Minutemen influences on their sleeves, which is fine by me, and they even do a song called, 'MIKE WATT' - who happens to have been the bass player for those aforementioned legendary bands (well, the Minutemen have withstood the test of time, anyway). What makes this release worth seeking out is that *Bichos* wields some very individualistic touches: the violin is tasty, unaffected, and original, the lyrics are amusing and frightening and emotive at the same time (no mean feat, that), and the singer/poet has a strange gravelly slur-roar, some kind of Joe Cocker-damaged (sorry, no insult intended) thing going on which works well in this setting. I for one certainly hope to hear more. (JS)

BLACKMADRID

Atlantic Crossing - The People's Journey

CD, New Alliance Records, PO Box 1389

Lawndale, CA 90260 (1995)

Three young Black spoken word artists produce some of the most powerful work to emerge since The Last Poets, and they call it Blackmadrid. Divided into four suites, *Atlantic Crossing - The People's Journey* succeeds in blending the ancient past of Timbuktu and the Middle Passage with urgent present-day motifs of Blacks soldiers in Somalia and the gang life of LA. The poetry is always richly creative and sharply critical of mainstream American culture, and the place Black Americans occupy within it. The whole disc is a trip worth taking more than once; Blackmadrid

is an exquisitely-rendered dream city where cultures and races mingle with, and nourish each other.(VT)

STEVEN JESSE BERNSTEIN

and Pete Leinonen

Words and Music

Cass., S.J. B. Archives, 1202 Pike Street, #922 Seattle, Washington USA 98122-3934

The tape insert claims equal attention should be paid to the bass and the poems. Leinonen's double bass work takes the beatnik of this recording over the top, for sure. But what's really striking in this excellent release is Bernstein's warm, low voice - in complete contrast to his later work, with Bill Laswell, for instance. Like always, Bernstein is tragic, sad and angry - a beautiful generalist for our misery. But his soft, "poet's voice," like that of a writer's first open-mic, keeps him closer to the audience. Less marketable, less different, but unnervingly vulnerable. (SD)

STEPHEN JESSE BERNSTEIN

The Sad Bag

Cass., S.J. B. Archives, 1202 Pike Street, #922 Seattle, Washington USA 98122-3934

The Sad Bag is a collection of songs and poems by the author, right before his big break.

He isn't much of a singer. In melody and subject matter the songs are reminiscent of Tom Waits.

The poetry - the only Bernstein I've heard without backing music, is stark white trash. "Your nakedness cost so much to get stitched on, you had to pay for it somehow," he states on 'Strip Poker'. He has a way with words. The juxtaposition of poem to song underlines the power of his message - by forcing the harshness of his text on the audience. Bernstein is at his best here: disturbing and magnetic. (SD)

JANINE BURIGANA

Jesus Christ Kids It's Christmas

2xCass., Life Rattle, c/o 247 Roxton Road, Toronto, Ontario M6G 3R1, Canada (1993)

Remember what it was like when your life had to make allowances for all the whims of parents whose values, sexism, prejudices and eccentricities seemed to arise from some unknown planet? Janine Burigana does, and that's what she's put on these tapes.

Narrated by the author and originally performed on CKLN radio in Toronto, *Jesus Christ...* is a series of linked stories about a girl living a tomboy's life in suburban Canada. Ms. Burigana is an astute observer of this life, from ball hockey in the streets to the tragedy of a young girl sitting down to find liver for dinner. Her ear for dialogue is impeccable, as is her ability to present kids' priorities, and

their interactions with parents, siblings and friends.

The only beef I have with it is that her narration could use more energy and variety. It's a little tired-sounding, and you have to get past it to find the energy in the stories.(IF)

JAAP BLONK

Flux-De-Bouche

CD, Staalplat, North American distribution by Soleilmoon Recordings, POBox 83296, Oregon, 97283, USA (1995)

A beautifully packaged CD of so-called sound or noise poetry in the grand dadaistic tradition, complemented by a technically flawless, Olympian performance of wild glottal acrobatics by the impish Dutchman with the un-dike-able throat, Jaap Blonk.

While listening to this generously long recording - the sparseness of which (it's strictly one man, one throat thruout) is gratefully offset by the rich variegation of material and performances - I was impressed and simultaneously perplexed enough to feel compelled to pull out my copy of Greil Marcus's amazing book on the "secret history" of dada and punk - *Lipstick Traces* - in order to try to wrangle out some kind of context for *FLUX-DE-BOUCHE*.

Well, all I can say is that you should read that book cover-to-cover as I'm simply not capable of encapsulating its polymathic contents for you here - suffice to say that doing so would greatly enhance the listening pleasure you'll milk from this CD, and it'll more generally rearrange the very molecules of your brain. I'm sure there are other good source-texts to search out, and if I was a little more thorough I'd dredge up a reference or two on the fluxus movement, concrete poetry (as practiced by Dick Higgins, who has one of his pieces performed on *FLUX-DE-BOUCHE*) and some of the other avant-garde tributaries branching from the primal, dadaistic fount.

Without having had any previous frontal exposure to his gran(da)daddy forebears such as Hugo Ball, Tristan Tzara, or Kurt Schwitters, I just sit back and boggle at the range of tremendously strange vocal extensions displayed by our man Blonk. Don't let the veils of ignorance prevent you from plunging on in. It seems to me that sound poetry of this sort is enjoying a minor renaissance/disinterment after many years of obscurity, but if it still hasn't blown thru your cultural-cistern as of yet, you're hereby advised to write Soleilmoon and get your hands on this baby - it's pretty damn staggering. (JS)

ROBERT BLY

An Evening with Robert Bly

Cass., Sounds True Recordings, 735 Walnut Street, Boulder, Colorado 80302 ph. (303) 449-6229 (1990)

This is the kind of lecture/reading you'd like to hear from any poet you want to know more about. American poet, novelist and translator Robert Bly reads his own work as well

as his translations and comments on work by Rilke, Baudelaire, Rumi and others.

Bly is particularly interested in the evolution of the human psyche, and the tape contains powerful insights into what drives his own work and how he assembles it. If he likes a piece he's reading, he turns around and says it again. Also includes the only recordings I know of Mr. Bly performing poetry to his own banjo accompaniment. (IF)

WILLIAM BURROUGHS

Vaudeville Voices

bootleg CD, Grey Matter - no address, but I've seen it in record shops, so it's out there

Less-than-essential cd-reissue of the pretty-damn-essential *Call Me Burroughs* lp from the early sixties. Obviously something is amiss with this equation. The value of this thing is hampered by the recent, superior reissue of the same material (masos-menos) by Rhino.

Super-crackly transcription of some beat-to-crud vinyl version is one reason (the Rhino boasts master-tape fidelity, ensuring that Bill's devastating voice will fill every available inch of your resonant energy-field, whether you want it to or not), and the lack of any historical contextualizing is another (again, Rhino fulfills that need about as well as you'd ever want).

What this version does have going for it is

1) The inclusion of the entirety of the 1970 one-sided lp *Ali's Smile*, originally done in an edition of 99 (with book) by the Unicorn Press, and not found on Rhino's *Call Me Burroughs* - a fact which will be of interest to collectors and smitten Burroughs aficionados, though I think the actual material is not much different, and not any "better," than the earlier stuff;

2) Several great photos and a reprint of Bill's calligraphic cover for the 1959 Olympia version of *Naked Lunch*; and

3) Semi-interesting/doofus liner notes by one "S.S.," which give voice to the timeless sentiment, and I quote: "Stephen King is obviously a mouse, Mickey is the human body on the end of every fork, and William Burroughs is the twentieth century." Got that?

So, if you've never heard any recording of Burroughs from this era (which are radically different than the way overexposed Hal Wilner and Disposable Heroes projects), you are hereby unequivocally advised to seek out the Rhino reissue of *Call Me Burroughs* at your earliest discretion and absorb that first. Just do it on the pretense (if you need one) of special "doctor's orders" - after all, Benway **will** be making repeated housecalls to your inner skull from here on out. *Call Me Burroughs* has been a Beat collector-grail for some time now, and at this late date could be deemed a stone classic - I tell you no lie. Ask anyone, Mavis. (JS)

DAVID CASTLEMAN

I Stammer it to Angels

Cass., PO Box 792, Larkspur, California, 94977-0792, USA

First side and part of the second contain a long prose post-holocaust fantasy called *I Stammer it to Angels*. 2nd side includes poems and commentary by the artist. At one point the artist suggests that his next poem is "far too subtle for most people to apprehend." Agreed.

Unfortunately includes mike noise, saturated tape levels, paper rustling and other glitches. (IF)

LOUIS FERDINAND CELINE

Vous parle:: Le voyage au bout de la nuit - lu par Pierre Brasseur

Mort a credit - lu par Arletty, Cass.,

This pirated recording is of such low quality that it is hard to grasp Celine's brilliant and wretched cynicism behind the crackle and hiss. The interview with Celine reminds me of conversations with truckers while hitch-hiking in Europe - "The Frenchman is like this, the German is like this, the Englishman is like this and that's why the Dutchman is such a good engineer." Pierre Brasseur breathes desperate life into the extract from *Voyage*. Arletty hums with sexuality and touches the listener with her expressive tones. There has been much said about Celine the satyr - the anti-Semite who hated nazis, his dark politics and misanthropy. *Vous parle* adds little to our knowledge of the man simply because the recording is so lousy. (SD)

DEAD AIR

Dead Air You May Not Want To Listen To

Dead Air Productions, 4929 Linden Rd., #817, Rockford, ILL 61109-5659 USA. (1992)

Dead Air are two people, EaMoN and RoSCo, dedicated to the deconstruction and appropriation of what goes on on talk radio. Through cut-up and splicing techniques, talking heads and religious-right mouthpieces say the darnedest things! Dead Air compositions covering themes like sex, repetition and contradiction are consistently fun and innovative as they tirelessly critique the endless on-air chatter that passes for social discourse in America. *The Sound of Your Own Voice* struck me as particularly hilarious, juxtaposing an instructional tape on clear public speaking with an avalanches of vocal idiosyncrasies culled from both callers and hosts on radio chat shows. (VT)

DUCT TAPE**Duct**

Cass., *Underwhich Audiographics*, 920-9th Ave. N., Saskatoon, SK S7K 2Z4; or Box 262, Adelaide Stn., Toronto, ON M5C 2J4. (1993)

Duct Tape is an improvisational sound group consisting of Gilles Turcotte on clarinet, Roy Sydiaha on percussion, Steven Ross Smith on vocals, and Bettina Grassmann on violin. *Duct* features live recordings of the group performing at AKA Gallery and the Persephone Theatre in Saskatoon. The pieces generally consist of lively instrumental improv with the occasional piece of poetry thrown in by former Owen Sound member Smith. The music frequently seems inspired by taiko and other Japanese minimalist music, and never veers into pure cacophony. Unfortunately, because of the live recording quality, Smith's vocal work is often hollow-sounding and somewhat buried in the mix. Of interest to sound poetry and art-improv fans, this is a limited edition cassette and might already be unavailable. (VT)

MAGGIE ESTEP**No More Mister Nice Girl**

CD, *Imago Recording Company/NuYo Records*
Distributed in the US by BMG

Maggie Estep is a spoken word pop-star. She has a hot band behind her, she can whine, she can yell, she can dance(?), and in some of the cuts on this CD she can do remarkable things.

When she tries to be obnoxious it works. She mocks macho guys and demure women equally, but these cuts—while funny the first time—quickly become just as grating and obnoxious (or irritating and repetitive) as the characters and situations they portray.

I mean I'm just as interested in panty stains as the next guy, and I agree she's screaming at an image of women that's been around since before Elvis told Priscilla to wear white cotton, but I'm still not sure how many times, and in how much detail I have to know about it before I get the point.

On the other hand she can do some amazing stuff. *Paradise Lost* is half-poem, half song, and a haunting look at how there's no substitute for what we lose. *Scarification* is the kind of love song I've been waiting to hear for years: where no one is glorified, the characters are real and their situation becomes all the more wrenching for its insight into the ways we actually live. Check out the difference:

Elvis: "Lay your head on my shoulder"

Estep: "Your messed up head is still staining my pillow"

The mix is excellent throughout. You can actually hear what she's saying, which seems a strange compliment for a CD of a (mostly) spoken word artist. Nevertheless it's surprising how many other poets who work with musicians garble or bury the voice track, and nice to hear what happens when you don't. (IF)

**THE GREEN THUMB AUDIO
VISUAL COLLECTIVE****The O<au>ral Transmute**

Cass., c/o The Center For Wireless Operations, 15 Cleve Rd., Montreal, PQ H3X 1A7. (1992)

The O<au>ral Transmute is a sound collage work focusing on the impact of 'white' dominant media upon Native communities, and highlights Native broadcasting projects aimed at counteracting mass popular culture. The collage format subverts the accepted media formula of packaging information, as the listener is exposed to speeches by Natives, interviews, songs and stories, snippets from mainstream news reports, and details on the function of Mohawk community radio, Innu community television, and more. *The O<au>ral Transmute* was originally broadcast as part of CKUT FM Montreal's focus programming 'The Truth Behind Columbus', which examined the consequences of celebrating the 500th anniversary of the arrival of European colonial powers in the Americas. (VT)

**B. GYSIN/W. BURROUGHS/
P. ORRIDGE****Interviews & Readings**

Cass., *Cold Spring Records*, 87 Gloucester Ave., Delapre, Northampton, NN4 9PT, England, UK

This is a most interesting cassette, probably pirated.

It contains Burroughs and others talking about the cut-up audio tape experiments that Burroughs did in collaboration with Brion Gysin and Ian Sommerville. These were released twenty years later on vinyl by Genesis P. Orridge (of *Psychic TV* fame), under the title *Breakthrough in the Gray Room*.

On the A side P. Orridge talks about how he met Burroughs and how the collaboration came about. Burroughs talks about the origin of the tapes themselves. The side ends with an extract from *The Last Words of Hassan I Sabbah*, Burroughs' narrative take on an 11th century Persian ruler who is attributed to have said "Nothing is true, everything is permitted." A highly interesting piece, as the quote is almost an axiom for the ruling consciousness in a lot of Burroughs' work.

On the B side Burroughs and others discuss the cut-up and fold-up techniques he used on paper and audio tape, and Burroughs narrates some of the results.

Like the cut-up tapes they document, this tape is a collage. A lot of times you have to figure for yourself who the speaker is, as there is no documentation and often no attribution. But these are quibbles. Pirated or not, the tape is an important source for anyone interested in Burroughs' work. (IF)

ANNA HOMLER, with Steve Moshier Breadwoman

Cass., Pharmacia Poetica, PO Box 749, Venice, CA 90291; 30 minutes

Tantalizingly odd and lovely experimental swathes from a performance artiste (and her faithful comrade) who has been deservedly getting a good deal more attention lately (she was recently interviewed in *ND* magazine, and she's had and will have a passel of CD releases in the recent past and near future).

Though "Breadwoman" could be said to evoke the not-exactly-well-known antecedents of sound-poetry, "found language" (à la Cage), and sweeping, electro-acoustic sound-texture baths in the grand tradition, the peculiar broth formed from Moshier's electronic sounds and Homler's invented language babbling and cooing is very much her own and immensely inviting.

To tag her untaggable stream-of-utterance as "invented language" is not all that misleading: while I don't have time to go into the many nuances involved (which Homler talks about at length in *ND* - another reason to track it down), I'll just mention in passing that many people have apparently picked out bits and pieces of African, Serbo-Croatian, and Japanese vocabulary in Homler's high-unconscious vocalizings - she herself has said that she's not sure, but has reason to believe that these "completely natural" eruptions of "cellular memory" have been lately mutating into some kind of cross between the Japanese and Spanish languages. Go figure.

Her recent stuff is more technically extended (think Shelley Hirsch, David Moss, Grette Bijma, et al., with whom she has collaborated on a very good cd called *VOICES* on Irene Schwiezer's INTAKT label) and yet still personalized and insinuating. While this tape shares qualities with other self-consciously avant-garde stuff I've reviewed this ish (jaap blonk, for example), this release stands out as easily the least dry-mouthed, and most human of the lot.

To sweeten the deal, in the cassette's liner notes Ms. Homler offers some linear thoughts on the manifold layers of meaning coursing through her seemingly beyond-sense innovations. She knows what she's doing, and I think we'd all do well to try and follow her trailblazing excursions into terra incognita. (JS)

KEDRICK JAMES CLINT RICE GARRET and others: Wild State • Scavenger's Autopsy

Cass., Atomic House of Poetry, c/o Action Poetry Management, 1621 Grant Street., Vancouver, B.C., V5L 2Y4, Canada

An interesting music/poetry collaboration, where the artists say all the music is improvised. The best of this tape can be found whenever you hear a man named Coat Cook come in on sax. In some places the horn is used in short, syncopated bursts reminiscent of Miles Davis; in others, sax and poetry are used like two voices in intimate conversation.

The middle of the B side features a hilarious section where demented pixie-like voices yak away as the sax blasts along, imitating both the tone and phrasing of the voices. The worst of this tape is when an electric violin is up front. A sour taste, and nowhere near as close a collaboration with the poetry. (IF)

LISA KUCHARSKI

A Variety of Barks, Hisses & Squeals

Cass., Self-produced; no address provided, (1993)

At first the listener might think Lisa Kucharski is attempting a recording aimed at children. The first track on this cassette, 'Prey vs. Predator', is indeed a variety of barks, hisses and squeals, as she creates a wilderness soundscape with the magic of home-recording technology. The next piece, 'Rabbits', lays this misapprehension to rest; Kucharski's rabbits are typical urban denizens, as are her cheetahs and lambs in wolf's clothing.

The quirky world-view Kucharski constructs has a slightly hermetic, introspective quality, and is reminiscent of a less didactic Sue Ann Harkey in its vast array of sound sources. We find refrigerators, pebbles, coconut shells, ice-cream trucks, trains, zoo animals, and bike wheels, to name but a few, all cleanly recorded and very well mixed. I look forward to hearing more prose/poetry/sound work from this freewheeling Chicago sound artist. (VT)

GENEVIEVE LETARTE

Vous Seriez un Ange

Cass., Les Ambiances Magnetiques,

Is god and she's mad. Haunting, beaten and defiant. Letarte speaks like someone who has come back from a restaurant dinner to find the neighbours have moved in and changed all the furniture. In this light, she explores the predicament of being a young Quebecois - even pride in her own nation seems forced upon her. Like a cautious bird, her eye is primed to find the disempowering, the frustrating, the unfair. The poems are sung to the sounds of some of Canada's premier electro acoustic musicians. While I am tempted to place her in the French *chansonier* tradition - with a focus on text - I fear she would resent it because she's carving out a project of her own. If art is imagining a world different from the status quo, then I should like to let Letarte dream away. The results are exquisitely atmospheric and deeply poetic. (SD)

GWENDOLYN MACEWEN***Noman's Land*****narrated by Gabrielle Rose***4 x Cass., Coach House/Music Gallery Talking Books, ISBN# 0-88910-375-5, CH/MG TB007*

While the story is particularly suited to narrative, the packaging of these tapes is an irritating example of the distance between the world of talking books and that of pieces created for audio tape. We assume Gabrielle Rose is narrating, which she does extremely well, only because her bio is inscribed on the sleeve. Otherwise she is not credited. There are no instructions on whether the tape uses noise reduction or not, and no ordering instructions.

The central character in *Noman's Land* is picked up naked on the roadside. He does not remember who he is, where he is, or how he got there. It's a vivid story that takes him from amnesia into the world he assembles from the very few pieces he does remember or understand.

Unless you love tape hiss, set your machine to normal bias, Dolby B noise reduction.(IF)

JACKSON MAC LOW***Open Secrets****CD, Experimental Intermedia Foundation, 224 Centre Street, New York, N.Y. 10013*

The blurb says "seven realizations of works for voices and/or instruments that require spontaneous performers' choices limited only by given materials and procedural rules, and one fully notated composition."

The worst of this sounds like what kept waking you up when you were trying to sleep at art school: Random voices and instrumentation held in a very narrow dynamic range, never quite engaging, but never quite dismissable either.

The best is a lot more interesting. In pieces like "Thanks" Mac Low uses numerous voices, words, sentence fragments and images—all of which hover just around the edges of meaning. The result is a commentary on the limits of language, on the sound of words, and on how much our brain will stretch to comprehend and assemble the tiniest shards of meaning and image into something coherent. (IF)

JACK MICHELINE***In Amsterdam – Songs, Poems, Stories, Chants, Skats****Cass., Ins & Outs Press, PO box 3759, Amsterdam, Holland (1982)*

Jack Micheline is a little known poet whose been knocking around since the late fifties. This live cassette gives a generous dollop of his oeuvre, which varies from Bukowskian tales of lasciviousness and gambling fever, to longer elegiac poems reminiscent of Ginsberg. Rough around the edges and with a raucous, enthusiastic audience,

including an outspoken dog, it's a performance by a soul survivor. (VT)

EILEEN MYLES***Madras****Cass., A Sheep on the Bus, 258 Bowery St., 3rd Floor, New York, NY 10012 (1994)*

Having gotten to know Myles through her wonderful book of poetry, *Not Me*, I'd popped in the cassette expecting more of the same. Instead I discovered a gorgeous coming-of-age (and, not coincidentally, coming out) story. Hearing Myles ruminate over the finer details of fashion-obsessed teen culture in the early sixties Arlington is close to living it, and conjures emotions familiar to anyone who had to grow up anywhere in post-WWII North America. Her well-honed storytelling skills are abundantly in evidence, and offer new pleasures with every listen. (VT)

KEN NORDINE***Upper Limbo****CD, Grateful Dead Records, gift catalog/merchandising info:(415) 898-4453 (no address) (1993)*

Upper Limbo is right! Ken Nordine takes his audience on a trip beyond all linear sense, all the while sounding perfectly reasonable about it. In Nordine's universe it's all relative; he inhabits 'The Kingdom of Noxt', "which is just a split second in back of 'now' which is just a hair in front of 'next'." He performs his neither-here-nor-there poems as 'word jazz', accompanied on this disc (recorded live at the Vic Theater) by The Freeform Group, a freefloating gang of musicians cut from the same noodling cloth as The Grateful Dead.

I can't stand it. It's like being trapped on a train from Nowhere to Erehwon, listening to a bore with nothing to say who takes eternity to say it. It's all beautifully recorded in a thick swaddling cloth of feel-good spaciness, and I really can't stand it. But maybe it's just a matter of personal taste. (VT)

PATSY RAHN***In Relation to the Lion****Cass., ENKI PRESS, distributed by The Nonsequitur Foundation, P.O. Box 2638, Santa Fe, New Mexico, 87504, USA*

Often the artist on these tapes seems caught between whether to do pure sound works, sound works with voice, or pure voice works. She starts a voice idea or a sound idea, begins to modulate it, and then drops it altogether for another idea. This can be intensely frustrating, as when she finally does extend an idea it is one of the most bizarre and twisted I have ever heard.

The cut in question is 'Red Woman', which begins innocently enough: A female narrator is speaking about the

fact that she has not given birth to a child. Everything is cruising along smoothly until, from deep within the womb I believe, we are assaulted by a computerized, alien, almost incomprehensible ET fetus who can talk. The voice serves as an excellent argument for anyone on the pro-choice side of the debate.

Best cut by far is 'Trojan Horse', a sound piece that takes breath sounds and ocean sounds and extends them in an elegant mix which gets more interesting each time you hear it. (IF)

ROBERT ANTON WILSON

The Acceleration of Knowledge

Cass., Sounds True Recordings, 735 Walnut Street, Boulder Colorado, 80302, USA ph. (303) 449-6229 (1988)

Sci-fi author Robert Anton Wilson talking about the accelerating evolution of knowledge and projecting his thoughts into a series of possible futures. At the start of the tape he says he is being picketed by fundamentalist Christians, although it's hard to see why. His vision of the future is relentlessly optimistic: Everyone will be living hundreds of years and somehow we will find a place for everyone else being born and knowledge will save us from pollution, exploitation, disease, technology and war. Right thinking will then take us to the planets and the stars. Yes Anton. (IF)

HILLEL WRIGHT

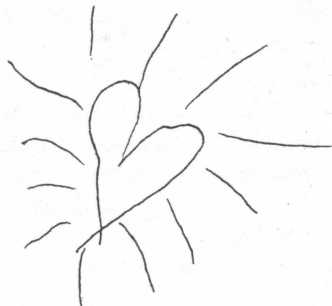
LABEL THIS!

Cass., MiNUS TiDES Tapes, Denman Island, British Columbia, VOR 1T0, CANADA

Mixes poetry with three or four genres of music, from talking blues to country to blues-rock to jazz to new age. When the genre is mostly music, the words suffer, as the author reaches around the block to make his lyrics rhyme.

Best cut is a beautiful, rhythmic piece on the second side called *Bo Knows Bo Diddly*, which casts Bo Jackson as the central cultural icon of the late 20th century. The anchor of the piece is the phrase "Bo knows" which becomes the spotlight shining on all human knowledge and culture, or at least anything worth knowing.

Recording quality is generally good, with the exception of some of the most explosive p's ever heard on tape. (IF)



COMPILATIONS

WORD UP

CD, Virgin Music Canada, c/o EMI Music Canada, 3109 American Drive, Mississauga, ON L4V 1B2 (1995)

Word Up is a dizzyingly encyclopedic spoken word anthology, boasting over thirty performers on 44 tracks. Produced by Jill Battson and Geoff Kulawick, the project evolved out of Battson's series of videos presenting spoken-word artists on Canada's Muchmusic television network. While 'eclectic' is the safest label to apply to this sprawling collection, there's a strong current of political awareness running through the pieces. It's a politics grounded in real experiences. Whether queer (Ian Stephens, John Giorno, Shawna Dempsey and Lorri Millan . . .), feminist/post feminist (Jean Smith, Judy Radul, Meryn Cadell . . .), or race-based (Reg E. Gaines, Anthony Bansfield, Clifton Joseph, Jeannette Armstrong . . .), the message never overpowers the poetry's ability to engage the listener. Styles cover the map, from rap to chant to song to sound to story, as the myriad artists take the listener through the Hungry Nineties at street-level.

The lack of contact addresses for any of the great performers on this disc is unfortunate, since many of them have larger bodies of work available. Still strongly recommended, especially for those seeking an entry-level spoken-word experience. (VT)

LIFE RATTLE CASSETTES:

1. LIFE RATTLE SPECIAL EDITION '90
2. LIFE RATTLE SPECIAL EDITION '91
3. LIFE RATTLE SPECIAL EDITION '92
4. SUSAN NEUMANN: *Jailbait And Other Stories*(1992)
5. EMILIO SINOPOLI: *The Hole And Other Stories*(1992)

Cass., Life Rattle, 247 Roxton Rd, Toronto, ON M6G 3R1 tel: (416) 531-6958

Rather than offering the work of spoken word 'artists', the *Life Rattle* radio series on Toronto's CKLN focuses on the extraordinary lives of 'ordinary' people. Susan Neumann, Florence Ng, Donna McFarlane, Minh Van Trong, Kwanza Msingwana and a host of other people featured on these tapes could be the commuters you see on the subway every day. But as their life stories unfold, we hear of savage child abuse, rape, the dispossessed in postwar Vietnam, a refugee caught in the corrupt bureaucracy of Kenya, a woman struggling to recover from the mutilation necessitated by life-saving surgery, the vortex of drug addiction, the battlefield of family politics.

There's not a boring moment to be found in these stories; the truths they speak are compelling. That's not to

say they're easy listening, however, as the audience must contend with a variety of accents, cadences and vernaculars. Also, the authors consistently deliver their message in the style of a police report, leaving the listener to draw meaning from the stories. While the variety of experiences offered by the compilations lends itself to the form, I found the cassettes featuring Susan Neumann and Emilio Sinopoli relentlessly depressing, and better in small doses. (VT)

A SHEEP ON THE BUS VOL. 3, FALL '93

Cass., A Sheep on the Bus, 258 Bowery St., 3rd Floor, New York, NY 10012

A Sheep on the Bus offers high quality spoken word recordings from in and around NYC. The fall '93 collection includes straight readings of prose and poetry, as well as an audio play by Jeff Morris, a couple of pieces with musical accompaniment (Christian X. Hunter, The Mellow Freakin' Woodies), and an over-the-top characterization of a receptionist for a high-class sex-for-sale operation by Penny Arcade. The compilation never offers less than up-to-the-minute social commentary, ranging from Mike Tyler's magnificent extended rant on America's Reagan-warped 'UnGeneration', to Sharon Mesmer's poem is praise of her cunt. (VT)

FALSE PHONEMES: TELL US, THE AUDIO CASSETTE MAGAZINE # 22

Cass., Tellus, 596 Broadway, New York, NY 10012. (1988)

Sometimes the production of a work can be more interesting than the results. This is the case with most of the pieces on *False Phonemes*. A collection of work by artists who use computer-generated voices with an emphasis on language, it often harks back to the days when nouveau analog synth technology spawned such novelty hits as 'Pop-corn' by Hot Butter. Many of the artists use intricate computer programming techniques such as DEC talk, linear predictive coding and Kentucky Pocket Braille, to produce exceedingly tedious noodlings of no interest to anyone. The only shining light in this dreary roboto-vox wasteland (even John Cage's piece is a bore) is Paul Lansky, who uses LPC to turn ambient cocktail party chatter into a haunting sound work reminiscent of a Philip Glass composition. (VT)

HOLLYWORD & INTERNAL JOURNEYS

CD, New Alliance Records, PO Box 1389, Lawndale, CA 90260 (1995)

Internal Journeys is like a trip to the supermarket, so many healthy cereals but they all taste the same. At least on *Hollyword* they're all grouped together: the Jim Morrison cereals, the cereals about Marlon Brando, about the Rolling

Stones, the cereals about LA's obsession with starfucking. No disservice to Kubernik is intended - he works hard. It's just a shame that the big spoken-word releases - the ones that get airplay and distribution - tend to be compilations. The trip over the poetic landscape happens so fast, you hardly even get to notice the garbage. (SD)

I Want Burning: The Ecstatic World of Rumi, Hafiz and Lalla Sufi mystical poetry read and translated by Coleman Barks

Cass., Sounds True Recordings, 735 Walnut Street, Boulder Colorado, 80302, USA ph. (303) 449-6229 (1992)

Barks tries hard to conjure the ecstasies of the Sufi mysticism and creativity in this live recording. The result, sounding more like a speech from the pulpit than Sufi mysticism, is, nonetheless moving at points. The translated stories and poetry give a glimpse into the mysticism of this highly creative and universalist sect of Islam. Barks reads about sex, about shepherds, about the universal love of God, about Moses, about everything that these great Sufi poets speak.

Perhaps because the poetry is so optimistic, the package as a whole works, even though every ounce of me thinks it shouldn't. The background music is more akin to the winning team at the Stanley Cup than it is to high religious art. This is the new take on the old ways, I guess. And I confess I'm partial to it, as I am to this Cass.. (SD)

RADIO VOID - ISSUE #13

2xCass., QORQ Productions, 71 Richmond St., Providence, RI, 02903, USA. \$15.00 payable to Radio Void, POB 5983 Providence, R.I.

Plug the world of alternative radio into your car stereo and go! You get life, death, stories, songs, ads, you name it.

A lot of the pieces on this tape require good, balanced stereo, as sounds are located in space, and often one track is presenting something entirely different than another. Best are the music and the continuing story of WANK AM, which you can turn on whenever the FCC and CRTC burn your ass. Not as successful is *The Tale of Maxi P Standard ...an Ant*, although it does contain some really funny lessons on how to modulate the basic word fuck so you can use it in every possible derivation, enunciation and situation. (IF)

THE UNITED STATES OF POETRY

CD, Mouth Almighty/Mercury Records, 516 West 25th Street, Ste. 306, New York NY 10001 (1996)

Bob Holman (Mr. New York Poetry Scene) does Jill Battson (Ms. Toronto Poetry Scene) one better, by not only

producing a PBS series on poetry and releasing both a spin-off book and CD compilation, but *also* (!) launches a brand new spoken-word record label, Mouth Almighty.

Reminiscent of *Word Up*, Battson's 1995 Virgin Records spoken word comp, *The United States of Poetry* covers all the bases, from hip-hop and rap-inspired verse to 'found poetry' (soldiers' drill songs, cheerleader chants) to founding fathers like Allen Ginsberg and Robert Creeley. The disc's dizzying eclecticism ropes together (to name only a few) Amiri Baraka questioning Spike Lee's portrayal of Malcolm X, performance poet Emily XYZ deconstructing Vegas, drag queen Lypsinka *not* actually reciting 'How Do I Love Thee', Joseph Brodsky delivering earnest lyricism, Ruth Forman on class and race politics in South L.A., and musings on male prostitution courtesy of queer shock writer Dennis Cooper. Hmmm. Background music composing team tomandandy help weld all the disparate parts together, and the mix only occasionally distracts from *da stuff*.

I like hearing poetry/pop music crossover Leonard Cohen cross over once again. I like hearing Delmore Schwartz' student, Lou Reed, pay homage. And I *love* hearing Maggie Estep without that rotten rock band of her's drowning her out! (VT)

OUR FATHER WHO AREN'T IN HEAVEN

readings by Don Bajema, Lydia Lunch,
Hubert Selby and Henry Rollins

CD, Widowspeak Productions, P.O. Box 1085, Canal Street Station, New York NY 10013-1085 (1990)

Back when his hot multimedia machine 2.13.61 was still a fledgling enterprise, Henry Rollins decided to put together a compilation "where the speakers get to really stretch." The result was *Our Father Who Aren't in Heaven*, a two-CD set released on Lydia Lunch's label. It includes four of Mr. Rollins' favourite performers, including himself.

I must say, it is nice to hear spoken word work allowed more than a minute or two on a compilation. Don Bajema's work ranges freely between prose and poetry, and covers the suburban trailerpark America of child abuse, spousal abuse, Vietnam vet syndrome and the patriarchal patterns that link all these things. The bleakness is transcended by Bajema's stellar writing abilities, all cleanly recorded here without embellishment. Lydia Lunch is a *performer*, and renders her interpretations of Bajema, Selby, Rollins and her own prose in a completely over-the-top style, perfectly accentuated by Jim Thirwell's music. Hubert Selby, best known for the unrelentingly harsh *Last Exit To Brooklyn*, comes across as surprisingly warm and human. His readings of middle-American psychosis were recorded live in Europe in 1989, when he accompanied Rollins on a spoken word tour. And Henry Rollins live is . . . well, Henry Rollins. One part awshucks gee willackers, one part pissed-off sociopath,

Rollins tells his tales in the grand style of all great high school raconteurs.

While the four artists on this collection cover a lot of ground, they all share an interest in modern-day taboos: drug addiction, sex and sexual deviance, murder, prostitution and so on. Yet they across like they have hearts of gold. Check out Rollins' label for more recent recordings and publications by all these people. (VT)

GYNOMITE

Fearless Feminist Porn

CD, Catasonic Records, in conjunction with incommuni-
cado, P.O. Box 2727, 1615 Wilcox Ave., Hollywood, CA
90078 ph: (213) 664-1404 fax: (213) 664-1228 Website:
<http://underground.net>

The operative word here is 'fearless'. Produced by The Flaming Viragos – Liz Belile, duVergne Gaines and Weba Garretson – *Gynomite* serves up female sex talk steaming hot. We're talking lesbian fantasies, het wet dreams, and the just plain uncategorizeable. Inspired by New Wave Feminism as preached by Susie Bright, seventeen women took the stage at LunaPark in L.A. and let it all hang out. It is, to quote Gaines: "raunchy, riotous, outrageous, feminist, sumptuous, raw, unpredictable and real."

My only quibble is with the sound quality. The live recording, while listenable, is uneven. Plenty of popping 'p's and voices fading in and out depending on the proximity of mouths to mics. Otherwise highly recommended (you won't hear this on the radio very often!).



WEB sites

B.A.W.P.: BEST-QUALITY AUDIO WEB POEMS

<http://www.cs.brown.edu/fun/bawpl/>

This month, featuring the work of Kaka Pussy. The site changes periodically and has excerpts of the works as downloadable audio files. Unfortunately these are in several arcane file formats. The site provides links to other servers that provide and explain the installation and use of software necessary to access and hear the files — but perhaps not for your platform. Best o' luck.

BRAZEN ORALITY

<http://www.infobahnos.com/~brazen/>

Yours truly, the on-line version of this mag.

CERVEKA

<http://www.musicwest.com/MW/Artists/Exenel/index.html>

Here's an Exene Cervenka page, and nearby you'll find Lydia Lunch (under /Artists/L/). Info, a bio, a discography, some hype.

EUPHONY

<http://euphony.com/euphony/articles/31/word/SpokenWord4-TC.html>

The folks at Euphony do an good job of presenting the Vancouver poetry scene on the Web (See John Sobol's scene report in this issue for bg.). Photos, audio excerpts, texts its all there and looks great.

GYNOBITE

<http://underground.net/Web/gynobios.html>

The Gynomite—Catasonic Records site. Includes bios, descriptions and audio samples from the Gynomite CD—a femporn extravaganza. Unfortunately you'll have to buy the CD to hear my favorite cut; by Liz Beslisle of course.

KNITTING FACTORY

<http://www.knittingfactory.com/Persons/CarlWatson.html>

Carl Watson performs on the NuYrorican Symphony CD, put out on the Knitting Factory label. The site includes bios of the participants and bg on the CD, the label and the club.

LEE-JOURNALS

<http://www.peg.apc.org/~firehorse/wsb/lee.html>

The Unofficial Burroughs home page. Extensive — a must for any Burroughs fan includes texts, photos. Fine graphics.

PACIFICA RADIO

[gopher://gopher.igc.apc.org:7011/orgs/pacifica](http://gopher.igc.apc.org:7011/orgs/pacifica)

A gopher site which gives access to the catalogue of Pacifica radios's vast archive of recorded poetry. Some of the descriptions are a abit thin, and many of the poets are probably more familiar to those in SoCal or SanFran. Tapes can be ordered for a modest fee.

(A) ROLLIN'S FAN

<http://www.st.nepean.uws.edu.au/~alfrollins/>

A fan of Mr. Rollin's provides texts, reviews, and info on his comings and goings.

YAHOO

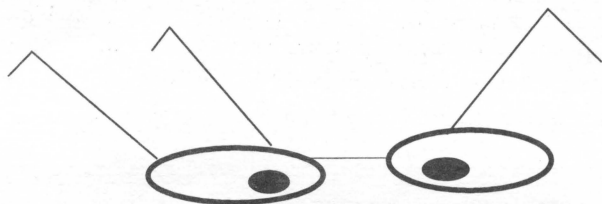
<http://www.yahoo.com/Arts/Literature/Poetry/>

Well if your looking for poetry or spoken word you might as well start here.

2.13.61

<http://www.two1361.com/>

The official page of Rollins' publishing arm. Here you'll find tour info, text and audio excerpts, bios of the artists for most of the releases by Rollins' label. Check out the new releases of the work of Hubert Selby Jr. Hot damn.



Radio Resources

RADIO FREE CANADA

CFRO-FM 102.7, 337 Carrall St., Vancouver, B.C. V6B2J4. ph: (604) 684-8494.

'RadioFreeRainForest', host: Gerry Gilbert, Sun. 9pm. Gerry Gilbert, 'RadioFreeRainForest'; P.O. Box 48884, Vancouver, B.C. V7X 1A8; Canada.

A long running, twice weekly, poetry show animated by one of Vancouver's finest poets.

CFUV-FM 101.9, P.O. Box 3035, Univ. of Victoria, Victoria, B.C. V8W 2P3. ph: (604) 721-8702. fax: (604) 721-8728.

'? FRAME ?', Host: Jim Andrews
The show features(ed?) Audio writing, radio art, w/ some poetry and fiction.

CHUO-FM 89.1 85 University, Suite 227, University of Ottawa, Ottawa, Ontario K1N 6N5. Ph: (613) 562-5965. Fax: (613) 562-5848.

'Five O'Clock Train', features poetry. Monthly, 2nd Thursday. Ottawa.

CHRY-FM 105.5, 258A Vanier College, 4700 Keele St, North York, Ontario M3J 1P3. ph: (416) 736-5293. E-mail: chry@chry.yorku.ca

'Covered And Bound', Host: Andrew Masuda, Tuesdays 4 pm. Covers literary topics.

'Art Attack', Host: Saira Chibber, Fridays 4:30 pm.

CITR-FM 101.9, #233-6138 SUB Boulevard, Vancouver, B.C., V6T 1Z1 ph: (604)822-3017; Fax: 604-822-9019. 'Hearsay', Sat. 5pm. Literary program

CIUT-FM 89.5, 91 St. George St., Toronto, Ontario M5S 2S8.

ph: (416)595-0909.

e-mail: ciut@campuslife.utoronto.ca
website:

<http://www.campuslife.utoronto.ca/groups/ciut>

'Howl', Hosts: Nick Beat, Steven Humphery, Treela Smith, Sundays 12 pm. Covers spoken word.

'Frontiers in Print', Host: Randi Spires, Mondays 10:30 am. Literary.

CJSF-FM 93.9, TC-216—Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, B.C. V5A 1S6 ph: (604)291-5940 E-mail: cjsf@sfu.ca

'Twisted Balloon', Hosts: Jen Lamb, Andrew Lithgow and S.R. Duncan, Sat. 11 am. Covers the Vancouver spoken word and poetry scene.

CKLN-FM 88.1, 380 Victoria St., Toronto, Ontario M5B 1W7. ph: (416) 595-1477 fax: (416) 595-0226

'In Other Words', Hosts: Susan Helwig and Death Waits, Tues. 2pm. Covers literary stuff.

CKUT-FM 90.3, 3647 University Ave., Montreal, Quebec, H3A 2B3. ph: (514) 398-6787 Fax: (514) 398-8261.

'Dromostexte', Host: Fortner Anderson, Thursday 8 pm. Yours truly. All contributions welcome.

RADIO FREE AMERICA

KAOS-FM 89.3, c/o Evergreen State College, CAB 305, Olympia, Washington 98507 USA. ph: (360) 866-
KAOS. Spoken word/audio art program hosted by Bob Daniels, Monday 7:30 pm.

KOHM-FM, Box 43082, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, Texas, 79409-3082 USA. Ph: (806) 742-3100, fax: (806) 742-3906

'Third Millenium', Host: Jerry Powell, Sunday 10 pm. Experimental / audio including spoken word / text-based work.

KPFA-FM 94.1, 1929 Martin Luther King, Berkeley, California 94704 USA. ph: (510)848-6767 Fax: (510)848-3812 Website: [HTTP://www.pacifica.org](http://www.pacifica.org)
Susan Stone coordinates several spoken word and poetry-oriented programs.

KSFR-FM, 626 Kathryn Ave., Sante Fe, New Mexico 87501 ;USA. ph: (505) 471-8200

'FishDrum On the Air' Host: Robert Winson, every third Saturday, 8 pm. Looking for spoken word artists and poetry/music collaborations. 'Recursos', Monday 7 pm. Poetry. 'Reading Sampler' Host: Dorothy Doyle, Wednesday 4 pm.

WCSB-FM 89.3, Cleveland State University, Rhodes Tower, Room 956, Cleveland, Ohio 44115 USA. ph: (216) 687-3523. E-mail: wcsb@wcsb.org Website: www.wcsb.org
'Fifth Man On The List' Host: Luigi. Spoken word/cassette enthusiast.

WFMU-FM 91.9, P.O. Box 1568, Mont Clair New Jersey, 07042 USA. ph: (201) 678-8264.

E-mail: wfmufm@wfmufm.org

'Word is the Bird', Host: Bart Plantenga. 'Hottest word mix nyc air' bob holman. Contact Ken Freedman (stn mgr) for more info.

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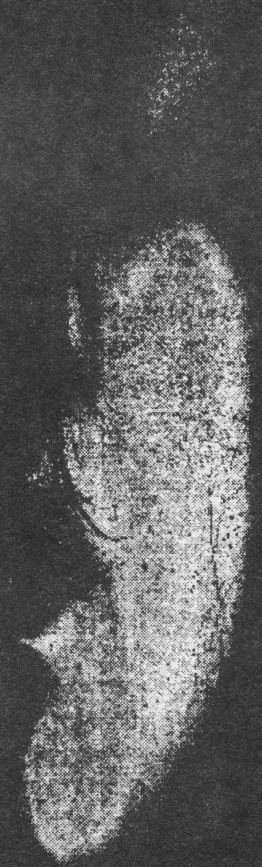
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Issue #3

Auralities

tongue t i l e d

a word festival

MAY 3

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POÉSIE MODERNE

MAY 4

RHYTHMIC
MISSIONARIES
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FORTNER
ANDERSON
FLUFFY PAGAN
ECHOES
CROSSROADS CANT
JULIE CRYSLER
DEE SMITH
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SHUT-UP SHELLEY
BONNIE JOI
THE SCHEMER
DAVE WILLIAMS
ALEX REYES
AT RANDOM

MAY 5

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GAIL SCOTT
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